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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2586

November 27, 1992

TROUBLESOME WEED COULD BE DIETARY NECESSITY -- Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service are conducting studies on what is considered to be one of the most noxious weeds in America, *Portulaca oleracea*, more commonly known as purslane. It contains high levels of fatty acids, vitamin E and other nutrients, making it a prime candidate for a new vegetable crop. Researchers found that purslane contains more of one omega-3 fatty acid than any other green leafy vegetable studied to date. Omega-3 fatty acids have been linked in some studies to reduced risk of heart disease and other health benefits, and are essential in building cell membranes, especially in the brain and eyes. ARS scientists have found that purslane contains 10 times more of the essential nutrient alpha-linolenic than spinach. Its fleshy leaves, about the size of a fingernail, have a mild, nutty taste. ARS researchers note that there is already a market for the crop as Europeans presently cultivate purslane for salads. **Contact: Helen Norman (301) 504-6471.**

USDA ANNOUNCES ARP SIGNUP DATES -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced that the 1993 acreage reduction program signup for feed grains, wheat, rice and upland and extra-long staple cotton will be March 1 through April 30. ARP percentage amounts for corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, wheat and upland cotton have been previously announced. ARP percentages for rice and ELS cotton will be announced later. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

SMOKEY BEAR CELEBRATES 50th ANNIVERSARY -- USDA's Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters unveiled a new slogan and logo to be used in the golden anniversary celebration of the famous bear. For nearly 50 years, Smokey Bear has reminded Americans to protect our nation's forests from fire. The new slogan is, "Remember... Smokey Has for 50 Years." "This anniversary slogan reinforces Smokey's classic wildfire prevention message, 'Remember, only YOU can prevent forest fires,'" said Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. "For the past half century, generations of Americans have grown up with Smokey. Our anniversary celebration will bring back a lot of memories and drive home Smokey's message of fire prevention to a new generation." From October 1993 to August 1994, foresters and fire officials across the country will participate in local and statewide events celebrating Smokey's golden anniversary. The anniversary will culminate with a celebration in Washington, D.C., on August 9, 1994. The winning slogan was submitted by the Ohio Division of Forestry and was chosen from 3,400 entries. **Contact: Lynn Pisano (202) 205-1499.**

PLENTIFUL HOLIDAY FAVORITES -- USDA's Economic Research Service is predicting record supplies of hams and turkeys will be available for holiday celebrations. Retail ham prices are about 2 percent below last year's relatively low price and will likely remain low through the holidays. December competition between ham and turkey is expected to be fierce as both sectors attempt to reduce cold storage stocks. **Contact: Leland Southard (202) 219-1285.**

FARMER-OWNED RESERVE LIMITATION -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced that 1992-crop wheat will not be allowed into the Farmer-Owned Reserve. "I am making this announcement now because it is clear the conditions to allow entry into the FOR do not exist and conditions are not likely to change before December 15," Madigan said. "I want producers to be able to plan their marketing and price support activities accordingly." The secretary must allow entry when the average market price for wheat for the 90 days preceding the announcement is less than 120 percent of the wheat price support rate and the 1992 estimated wheat ending stocks-to-use ratio is more than 37.5 percent. If one condition is met the secretary may allow entry. If neither condition is met, there is no authority to allow entry of 1992-crop wheat into the FOR. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

NEW PRIVATE BIRD IMPORT STATIONS -- USDA has selected 13 applicants to operate new, privately-run, government-inspected import and quarantine facilities for birds and hatching eggs of ostriches and other ratites. Six stations will be located in Florida, 2 in New Jersey, 2 in Arizona and 3 in Texas. Privately-run, government supervised quarantine stations were instituted when demand for imported pet and exotic birds far outstripped available government import and quarantine facilities about 15 years ago. In addition to the 13 new stations, about 30 stations are currently active and operating. Contact: Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222.

USDA ANIMAL ASSISTANCE -- USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has an agency that can provide help with nearly any type of animal threat. The Animal Damage Control agency has offices in most states throughout the country staffed by professional wildlife biologists, trained in handling a variety of situations. ADC offers suggestions to the public on how to eliminate the problem, usually without having to take the life of the animal. One example involved roaming coyotes in New Mexico. The coyotes killed a pet dog and wandered into backyards. An ADC wildlife biologist evaluated the situation and suggested the county cut the vegetation around the neighborhood. The recommendations were followed and the coyotes have stayed away from the neighborhood. ADC has a toll-free hotline which receives calls involving nearly every animal-related problem imaginable. About 40 percent of the calls are related to health and safety problems caused by wildlife. The number is 1-800-442-0708. Contact: Robin Porter (301) 436-7799.

NITRATE ACCUMULATIONS IN LIVESTOCK FORAGE -- Winter pastures of ryegrass, wheat and oats can accumulate excess nitrates during heavy overcast weather. Cattle digest the food with the aid of a biological flora of small organisms. These bacteria reduce nitrate to nitrite, which is more toxic. When nitrite contacts red blood cells, it changes the red pigment hemoglobin so that it cannot transport oxygen. Signs of oxygen starvation include blue membranes in the mouth, rapid breathing, weakness, staggering, collapse and death. Cattle owners are urged to get professional assistance through their extension office if they have questions about feeding cattle. Contact: Steve Nicholson (504) 388-4141.

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1851 -- Brenda Curtis takes an analytical look at the recent U.S./EC oilseeds agreement that could pave the way to an agreement at the stalled GATT talks in Geneva. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1333 -- Give a bug for Christmas; chestnuts on an open fire; turkey bringing home the bacon; preparing for the arrival of Africanized bees; and funeral costs. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1842 -- USDA news highlights; the U.S. and the EC agree for now; wheat and the farmer owned reserve; smaller returns for fruit growers; and chestnuts and farmers. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1548 -- Getting the salt out; whey reduces erosion; grazing on elephantgrass; subtropical legume; and raising cattle in the subtropics. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, December 8, crop/weather update; Thursday, December 10, U.S. crop production, world ag supply/demand; Friday, December 11, farm labor, world ag/grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Monday, December 14, milk production and ag income/finance outlook. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on an SCS Yukon River erosion project and John Snyder takes a look at the growing popularity of mushrooms.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski on weather and crops; USDA economist Barbara Claffey on agricultural outlook; USDA economist Ed Allen on wheat outlook and USDA economist Diane Bertelsen on fruit outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on Christmas trees; Deboria Janifer reports on holiday menu makeovers and Lynn Wyvill reports on holiday buffet food safety.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. Five minutes of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., ET, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., ET, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

PEOPLE WHO SERVICE GRAIN DRIERS...are doing a land office business, says **Tony Randall** (KXRB/KKLS, Sioux Falls, SD). The corn harvest is late and moisture content is high. Tony says it's getting difficult to find either driers or gravity boxes to help dry the crop. Producers are also confronting a propane shortage. Tony says oil firms can't get it through the pipeline and delivered fast enough to meet demand.

EARLY ESTIMATES...indicate 1992 could be the best crop year in the history of the state, says **Dan Gordon** (Tennessee AgriNet, Nashville). High yields are being recorded for corn, soybeans, cotton and tobacco. He says concern about the wetlands issue has become somewhat reduced because local officials are taking into consideration the interests of farmers when making decisions. Dan says plans are underway for a major expansion of his network. An announcement is expected in December.

WINTER WHEAT IS UP...and looking good, says **Dave Sparks** (KGNO, Dodge City, KS). Recent rains have provided enough moisture for germination of the crop.

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ISSUES CONFERENCE...November 24 in Worthington, MN was organized by the farm department, says **Don Wick** (KWOA, Worthington, MN). The theme this year was "Achieving Competitiveness" for pork producers. North American Farm and Power Show will be held Dec. 2-4 at the convention center in Minneapolis. Don will broadcast live, covering events for his listeners. Congratulations to Don. He is serving again this year as NAFB North Central Region vice president.

NEW VOICE...at KTTS, Springfield, MO is **Joann Locke**, recent graduate of Southwest Missouri State University. She replaces **Mike Wiles** who is sales manager for a local farm equipment firm. Joann will be covering the Governor's Conference on Agriculture, Dec. 13-15, at Lake of the Ozarks.

SCARCITY OF PROPANE...has boosted its price, says **Neil Trobak** (KCIM/KKRL, Carroll, IA). He says some producers are spreading corn on blacktop parking lots to dry crop moisture content from 25%. Neil says either snow or a hard freeze is needed to allow producers to get into the fields.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio and TV Division